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# BELFAST MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

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## COMMUNICATIONS ORIGINAL AND SELECTED

*To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.*

### PORTRAITS OF MATRIMONY.

"But happy they, the happiest of their kind,  
Whom gentler stars unite, and in one fate  
Their hearts, their fortunes, and their beings blend."

IT is generally acknowledged, that upon good or bad fortune in forming the matrimonial connection, depends the greater part of human happiness, or misery. Where mutual esteem, sympathy, and confidence, unite together the husband and wife, they are, in a great measure, independent of the world. The accidental unfortunate occurrences with which they must occasionally meet, are to them only as the report of distant enemies, or foreign wars: the unpleasing intelligence may give a momentary uneasiness; but as there is peace at home, tranquillity is soon resumed. Nay, there is something so amiable in genuine, unaffected, modest love, that it blesses not only the married pair, whom it unites together, but all who have the good fortune to be witnesses of their happiness.

We are pleased with them, because they seem pleased with each other, participating, as it were, in the happiness we admire; we never fail by the contemplation of such a scene, to become better satisfied with ourselves, and all the world besides. Discord, on the contrary, or the evident want of harmony and

affection between husband and wife, is the source of uneasiness not only to the parties themselves, but to all their acquaintances. We must always condemn, despise, or pity the unfortunate pair: and as these feelings are all of the unpleasing kind, we, universally depart with dissatisfaction, if not disgust, from the scene, in which they are called into exercise.

Having, of late, experienced very forcibly the effect of both of these pictures, my attention was naturally directed to the consideration of those shades and colourings that constitute their difference. In other words, I was led to enquire, what is it in the conduct of husband or wife, that renders their company such a source of pleasure or pain, admiration or disgust, to their friends and acquaintances. Reviewing for this purpose my intercourse and acquaintance with two families—the one the most finished and happy, the other the most unfortunate portrait of married life, I was induced to extend my observations, and take in all the intermediate gradations between matrimonial happiness and misery. And, having commenced with the happy picture, I proceeded, by inquiring what were the circumstances that prevented the other family in question from appearing to the same advantage, as a matrimonial portrait. The following sketches are therefore copied from living originals; and are the result of

real observation. And in hopes that they may be the means of assisting young persons in forming fortunate matrimonial connections, or making the best of those already formed, they are offered to publicity through the medium of your magazine:

*Portrait 1st.*

HORATIO is a man who received a polite, if not liberal education, and entered into business at an early period of life. Contrary to the practice of the greater part of men in business, Horatio continued at every leisure interval to prosecute the study of polite and elegant literature. By this means his mind became susceptible of other emotions, besides those occasioned by profit and loss, and he learned that life has greater enjoyments for rational creatures than the consciousness of having made an advantageous market, swindled successfully at cards, or drunk all his companions asleep. Horatio felt that he was formed for the noblest society, that society which is founded upon esteem, sympathy and benevolence. His soul sighed for the soothing endearments of female friendship, and was if possible in love with love, even before acquaintance with Evelina, had actually inspired him with that passion. Evelina though an only daughter, was remarkable for unassuming modesty, and engaging sweetness of disposition, whence it may be inferred she was very liberally endued with natural understanding. She was not a poetical beauty, though as near to it as most of the daughters of Eve. And, as every expressive feature was a hieroglyphic for good sense or good nature, Horatio at their very first acquaintance, recognized her as the person whom he had loved by anticipation, and of whom he had been in search for a considerable

time. He therefore immediately cast all his earthly hopes of happiness upon the chance of obtaining her as the friend of his bosom, and the partner of his comforts. It is easy to see that two such kindred souls, could not be long acquainted without a sentimental union. Horatio's feelings took every opportunity of acquainting Evelina with his partiality for her; and she only waited to be fully convinced of this partiality, before acknowledging for him a similar feeling. They were accordingly married, and in discharging the respective duties of their station, particularly in their attention to each other, and to six lovely children, they exhibit that amiable picture which I have often contemplated with unmixed satisfaction and pleasure; and of which the following is a faint outline.

The author of our nature, and of the institution of marriage, has declared the relation between husband and wife to be such, that they are no longer two, but one. One for instance in affection, one in counsel, one in happiness, and in a great measure one in hopes. Now the finest illustration of this declaration is the conduct of Horatio and Evelina towards each other. They appear to be actuated only by one soul, and in all things to have the most perfect understanding of each others inclinations. The love by which they are united is of that dignified kind, that is gratified, not so much by possessing, as by being enabled through that possession, to render its object happy. We never therefore see between them individual feeling produce mutual dissatisfaction; or the wants and antipathies of the one, opposed with acrimony to those of the other. On the contrary, there is an evident anxious solicitude on the part of each to sacrifice their own private or particular predilections, to those of the

other. Whilst these sacrifices are made, not with the look, tone, or gesture of one ostentatiously sacrificing feeling at the altar of peace, and meritoriously doing an obliging act, at the expense of painful self-denial; but with the placid readiness of a person wishing to oblige; and the cheerful complaisance of one whose chief delight it is to be the means of another's happiness.

Gentle altercations, I have occasionally seen take place between them; and the reasons by which their respective opinions were supported, compared together, with considerable earnestness and spirit. The design of each, however, in such contentions, it was easy to see, was not to gain a selfish victory, or triumph over the others weakness, and confessed inferiority; but solely to prevent, or remove a mistake, and arrive at truth, and correctness. The opinion of each was offered with the most conciliating gentleness. The tone and look, with which it was accompanied, were strongly expressive of regret for the difference of sentiment. Every circumstance of any weight in the arguments of either, was, with a solicitous candour, admitted by the other; and when any obvious or ludicrous mistake was detected, it was the source of as much amusement and pleasure to the author as the detector. In a word, the very differences that occasionally arise between Horatio and Evelina, are conducted in such a manner, are so fraught with mutual love and confidence, and are, in general, so productive of cheerfulness and good humour, that they are the source of much pleasure and gratification to an occasional visitor. They are such interruptions of the general agreement as give no disturbance, or if we may use a simile, they are like certain discords, in some pieces of music, which, though in their nature highly dis-

agreeable from their situation, and the manner of their introduction, contribute no inconsiderable share to the general harmonic effect.

To a friend of Horatio's, when introduced by him for the first time to Evelina, their union or sympathy of soul is truly delightful. Though to her an utter stranger, he soon finds himself on the footing of an intimate friend. Learning from the manner of his introduction the rank he holds in her husband's estimation, and immediately giving him the same place in hers, she treats him with all the attention and tenderness due to an intimate friend of her own. It is impossible to describe the satisfaction a person in such a situation experiences. Evelina seems so charmed with the visit, and to take so much pleasure in her attentions to the visitor, that he feels, instead of the cause of embarrassment and trouble, the occasion of happiness and delight. Evelina's looks speak nothing but affection for Horatio, and good will towards his guest. By an intuitive sympathy impossible to be described, she anticipates her husband's wishes, and fulfills all his intentions respecting his friend. Indeed the whole of her conduct and demeanor in such a situation cannot fail of calling up to the mind of him who has read the scriptures, Solomon's beautiful description of the virtuous woman. "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her; she openeth her mouth in wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness." Whilst the conduct of Horatio is the best comment upon the Apostolic exhortation. "Husbands love and cherish your wives, even as yourselves."

The mutual affection that thus characterizes every part of the conduct of Horatio and Evelina, is, as might be expected, productive of the happiest effect upon their children.

Brought up in the very school of love, the strictest harmony reigns amongst them. The tender looks and obliging expressions of their parents, are beautifully reflected in the children's conduct. Those who have never been acquainted with such a family, and who have generally observed children to be pettish, brawling and contentious, will not easily credit with what reluctance any thing is ever refused by one of Horatio's children, and with what patient acquiescence that refusal is acceded to by the other; with what cheerful and obliging readiness the parental injunction is always fulfilled; or the demanded self-denial practised. And how much the children resemble their parents in seeming to live for each others happiness.

This cordiality and love that reigns so delightfully amongst their children, is undoubtedly to be ascribed to the wise and prudent conduct of the parents. When any symptom of selfishness, envy, or outrageous disposition has appeared in any of their children, they immediately check it, not by opprobrious and degrading epithets; not by violence and rage; much less, by the worst of all methods, severe corporeal punishment.

These modes of correction are like some improperly applied medicines, which remove the troublesome symptoms, but at the same time increase the radical disease. They may procure peace, and restore harmony at the moment, but it will be at much future expense. For as differences must occasionally arise between the children in their parents absence; those who consider themselves injured, will naturally have recourse to the same mode of correction they have been accustomed to see used. Hence if they have heard opprobrious epithets applied, or seen violence used, in look, tone, or ges-

ture, they will of course fall into the same practice, and scurrility, contentions and quarrels will be the consequence. Besides the child that is punished for a fault in any of these methods, although he may be compelled to acknowledge his error, or give up the point in question, has, nevertheless, his temper soured, and is encouraged in the spirit of rebellion. He submits to his parent as the slave to his master, i. e. to overpowering and tyrannical force. But as the parent soon relaxes from his severity, and gives way to fond indulgence, the aspect that enforced obedience, is no more, its terror is forgotten, and as the understanding has neither been convinced, nor the temper softened, the offence will again be repeated.

Horatio's children when guilty of offences, are corrected in a much more gentle, rational and effectual manner, viz. by an appeal to their feelings. Those who have never seen this method of correction used, may be ready to look upon it as ridiculous. "What feeling or sense of propriety" they will be ready to exclaim "can we expect in children?" We shall not attempt answering this objection, by endeavouring to prove that children as soon as capable of committing a fault deserving correction, have in matters respecting their own conduct, as strong a sense of right and wrong, and as pungent a feeling of shame as those of more mature years, and frequently seared sensibility. Nor shall we stop, to enquire whether every person be capable of using this mode of correcting children; but from experience we can assert its happy effect, in the hands of Evelina. With the most engaging sweetness she appeals to the little culprits, if their conduct was not unworthy of themselves, or if their request be not unreasonable. She states at the same time, in the clearest manner,

the reasons upon which her judgment is founded, assures them such conduct would render them unworthy of her love, and banish them from the society of their brothers and sisters. If these remonstrances which are always made in a firm, decisive tone, and with a look expressive of feeling what she says, does not produce the desired effect, the offenders are condemned to a distance from their parents favour, until sensible of their impropriety, they come to make intercession by repentance, and promised amendment. Whenever this happens they are restored to favour, with some good natured observations upon the nature of their misconduct, after which the offence is never once again mentioned.

Horatio is certain on every such occasion to support the authority of Evelina, by his unqualified concurrence. The other children are by habit taught to observe the most perfect silence. The offender has nothing therefore by which he may defend himself, or by which his attention might be in the least diverted; and as his misconduct is always represented with the greatest gentleness and affection, having nothing to rouse the feelings of opposition, it is seldom that failing to be at once melted into penitence and submission, he subjects to even a temporary alienation from parental favour.

I have often admired Evelina's steadiness, if once she has taken notice of an offence, in insisting upon submission, and promised reformation. The same is also her conduct in denying any requested indulgence, if the refusal be once given, whatever may be urged by eager entreaty or whatever may be suggested by parental fondness, she makes it a point never in *one instance* to yield. Indeed by having observed such a line of conduct for a considerable time, she is now seldom detained by

obstinate impenitence, or fatigued by importunate entreaty. There is in the one case no hope for the culprit, but in submission, and in the other, nothing to expect from persevering importunity. Her determination is generally therefore followed, by immediate compliance with her will, whilst the gentle, amiable, and affectionate manner in which censure is passed, or the request refused, atones in a great measure for the sacrifice, and secures the family love, harmony and happiness.

The complexion of severity which Evelina's conduct may seem to have assumed, in the above description, arises wholly from the impossibility of expressing in words her manner of reproving and correcting her children. There is indeed in this manner much of dignity, but nothing of severity. Her looks are strongly expressive of affectionate regret, and tender compassion. And her language is the language of love directed by an imperious sense of duty. There is nothing in her manner that has the least semblance of severity, except her perseverance in enforcing her determinations. And this is done in so calm and gentle a manner, and has so powerful an effect in preventing the repetition of offences, that even it is any thing rather than severe. Never were parents fonder of their children, and more indulgent in their conduct. Whatever is praiseworthy in any of them, is always sure of its reward. Maternal eloquence delights to paint it in the most glowing colours to the delighted father, whose approbation and distinguished favour is the highest meed of his aspiring children. The little blushing prattler is then distinguished by some token of parental partiality and fondness. Whilst the happiness of the parents

reflected from each others countenances, illuminating the faces of all their children, renders the scene truly Elysian. Happy Horatio ! Happy Evelina ! And thrice happy the children, pledges of your love, and bonds of your mutual affection ! Compared with the portrait which you exhibit, with what horror does my soul shrink from the uninteresting, lifeless, disgusting picture, exhibited by the selfish union of wedded estates, and family alliances. The vain pride of pompous names, and empty pageantry, the revels of luxury, the fanaticism of gambling, and the state parade of separate apartments, and mercenary nurses, are poor substitutes for that sympathy of soul, tenderness of intercourse, tranquillity of mind, and indulgence of parental feeling, which bless the unambitious happy lot of Horatio and Evelina. Look at this happy, delightful family, ye sons of licentiousness and dissipation, blush for your conduct, and despise yourselves ! Your pleasures are the fruits of injustice, degradation of your fellow-creatures, and destruction of all the refined and dignified feelings of your nature. They are like the ravings of a delirious fever, the strongest symptoms of your dangerous situation. These pleasures will soon forsake you, remorse will supply their place ; from the bed from which you are no more to arise, you will behold your surrounding children, the degraded objects of your former wickedness, or the neglected infants of your wedded old age. The misfortunes of those dearest to you, occasioned by your own misconduct and neglect, will thus be left behind you. The pangs and agonies of a vice-wrecked constitution will be present, and the divine judgments before you. In this awful, comfortless situation, contrast your own state with what may reasonably be expected to be that of Ho-

ratio when bidding the world farewell. From the arms of Evelina he may behold his children dejected indeed, at parting with him, but prepared for respectability and happiness in the world, by his example and attention. The chief object of his affection he sees rapidly preparing to meet him in a happier clime. And the divine goodness, his support through life, he now feels to be his everlasting portion. His soul thus complacent in its situation, satisfied with life, and resigned at death, rests tranquil upon the divine goodness ; and on the wings of redeeming love is wafted away to the regions of everlasting peace.

(End of Portrait first.)

*Reconnoitering Hill, June 1, 1811.*

SHANESBOROUGH,

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*For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.*

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THE WRITER OF THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE WHICH APPEARED IN THE BELFAST COMMERCIAL CHRONICLE, HAS REQUESTED ITS INSERTION IN THIS PLACE. HE HAS FURNISHED THE ADDITIONAL REMARKS.

HAVING in my possession a treatise upon the VIRTUES OF COLD WATER, and its wonderful effects in cases of fevers, and especially in eruptive fevers ; I could not read without some surprize and admiration the extraordinary instances which are there given of the success attending its prudent administration. At the same time, the author being a respectable clergyman, and reporting chiefly the cases which came under his own cognizance, I could not doubt the truth of his statements. His reasoning upon the subject tended still further to convince me he was right, it being as far as I could judge, rational, satisfactory, and conclusive. He says what appears to be very just and true, that in all cases of fever,